PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN

08-09

MINISTRY OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

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This Annual Report is also available in electronic format (PDF) from the Ministry's website at: **www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca.**

Letters of Transmittal

The Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan

May It Please Your Honour:

I respectfully submit the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to increased transparency and accountability and to delivering and building on its promises to Saskatchewan people. Government has defined its direction and communicated this direction to its ministries through the vision and goals released with the 2009-10 Budget. Ministries have developed strategies and actions to help deliver on Government's plan for Saskatchewan — to be Strong and Steady in the years to come. This report demonstrates progress toward commitments made to the people of Saskatchewan in the program areas of Social Services in Government's first year of office. The initiatives pursued in 2008-09, and the results achieved, are communicated to the legislature and Saskatchewan people through this report.

Significant achievements by the Ministry in 2008-09 include: indexation of the Saskatchewan Assistance Program shelter allowance; increased benefits under the Seniors Income Plan, more than doubling the benefits received by eligible seniors; $5.5 million for 82 additional out-of-home spaces for at-risk children; a funding increase of $1.1 million for transition houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen services to women who are sexually assaulted and/or are the victims of domestic violence; the development of plans for 106 adults with intellectual disabilities who were waitlisted for specialized, residential or day-program services – addressing nearly one quarter of the current waitlist; assisted 1,649 households complete renovations and energy efficiency retrofits to improve the quality and affordability of housing; assisted 297 households meet the dream of homeownership; and completed the development of 349 rental units around the province.

We will continue to build on these accomplishments and deliver on Government's promises to the people of Saskatchewan in the year ahead.

Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

The Honourable Donna Harpauer
Minister of Social Services

Dear Minister:

I have the honour of submitting the Annual Report of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009. I acknowledge responsibility for this report and assure that the information contained herein is accurate and reliable.

Marian Zerr
Deputy Minister

Introduction

This annual report presents the activities and results of the Ministry of Social Services for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009. It reports on public commitments made, and other key accomplishments of the Ministry.

As a transition year, the 2008-09 Annual Report follows a similar format to the 2007-08 Annual Report, and also includes the Government's vision and three goals. With the release of Ministry Plans for 2009-10, ministries will report on publicly committed strategies and actions identified in their plan within the 2009-10 Annual Report.

The 2008-09 Annual Report also sets the stage for the 2010-11 planning and budget process by providing an opportunity to assess the accomplishments, results, and lessons learned, and identifying how to build on past successes for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

Alignment with Government's Direction

The Ministry's 2008-09 Annual Report aligns with Government's vision and three goals:

Our Government's Vision

A secure and prosperous Saskatchewan, leading the country in economic and population growth, while providing a high quality of life for all.

Government's Goals

- Sustain Economic Growth for the benefit of Saskatchewan people, ensuring the economy is ready for growth and positioning Saskatchewan to meet the challenges of economic and population growth and development.
- Secure Saskatchewan as a safe place to live and raise a family where people are confident in their future, ensuring the people of Saskatchewan benefit from the growing economy.
- Keep Government's Promises and fulfill the commitments of the election, operating with integrity and transparency, accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.

Together, all ministries and agencies support the achievement of Government's three goals, and work towards a secure and prosperous Saskatchewan.

Ministry Overview

With about 2,000 employees (1,973.1 FTEs) and a budget of more than $675 million, Social Services is one of the largest ministries in the Saskatchewan Government. The Ministry includes the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), a Treasury Board Crown that supports the operation of about 31,000 social and affordable rental and homeowner housing units. Social Services provides child welfare services, income support programs for low-income families and seniors, social assistance programs for people out-of-work, housing supports, and programs and services to support families and people with disabilities.

Mandate

The Ministry supports citizens at-risk as they work to build better lives for themselves through economic independence, strong families and strong community organizations. The Ministry assists these efforts through income support, child and family services, supports for persons with disabilities and efforts to develop affordable housing, and by building greater capacity in community-based organizations.

Service Delivery

The Ministry delivers most of its programs through five regional offices and 20 local service centres. Saskatchewan Housing Corporation works with local housing authorities and community agencies and has operations offices in four regions, including the North. Initial application to the range of the Ministry's financial assistance programs is through a central, phone-based Contact Centre. The Centre is the first point of contact for low-income people applying for income assistance from the Ministry. Contact Centre staff determine if the applicants are eligible for assistance, then direct new applicants to the appropriate Ministry programs. In 2008/09, the Ministry had 290 contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs) accounting for 652 programs, at a total annual investment with CBOs of approximately $112 million. These independent organizations form an important part of the human services system by addressing local issues and needs. Services range from group homes for people with disabilities to mobile crisis units and meal programs for low-income children.

Key Programs and Services

Income Assistance

The Ministry offers a range of programs for low-income individuals and families to help them meet basic financial needs and additional costs they may incur as they become self-sufficient. These programs provide additional income, housing and health benefits, and help improve the quality of life for low-income, working families. Programs and services include:

- **Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP)** – a program of last resort for families and individuals who, for various reasons including disability, illness, unemployment or low income, cannot meet their basic needs.
- **Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA)** – provides short-term financial assistance to people with basic financial needs while they participate in employment services or pre-employment services and training. Also provides temporary assistance to those who have a known date for employment or are receiving Employment Insurance benefits or some other form of financial support.
- **Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES)** – helps families with the child-related costs of working (child care, transportation, etc.).
- **Seniors Income Plan (SIP)** – provides a monthly supplement for seniors who have little or no income other than the federal Old Age Security (OAS) pension and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).
- **Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS)** – paid to eligible low-income families or persons with disabilities to promote access to safe, affordable, and quality housing.
- **Child Care Subsidy** – helps eligible families meet the monthly costs of licensed child care by reducing the fees charged to eligible parents. Subsidies are paid directly to child-care centres or family child-care homes.
- **Discount Bus Pass Program** – provides discounted bus passes to eligible low-income people through transit authorities in the communities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Yorkton.

Children and Families

The Ministry provides targeted support programs to at-risk children, youth and families. It also supports child welfare services to protect children from abuse and neglect. In addition, regional staff provide case management, supervision, assessment and treatment for children in the Minister's care. Programs and services include:

- **Child Protection Services** – are provided by the Ministry under the authority of *The Child and Family Services Act*. First Nations Child and Family Services agencies, through delegated authority of the Minister of Social Services, provide similar services to children and families living on-reserve. The primary purpose of child protection services is to provide services to children, youth and families where a child is in need of protection due to abuse or neglect. The Ministry investigates reports of child abuse or neglect and, if required, takes action to ensure the child's safety.

- **Foster Care** – The majority of children in the care of the Ministry are in foster homes. Private families provide foster care to children who cannot live with their own families for a period of time. Before becoming approved to have children placed with them, foster families must successfully complete an orientation and home approval process which includes standardized training. There are about 765 foster homes in the province.

- **Extended Family Care** – is an option for placing a child in need of protection with relatives or others who have a strong relationship with the child. Placement with extended family maintains a child's connection to their family and community.

- **Therapeutic Foster Care Program** – Some children in the care of the Ministry require additional care, treatment or education. This program offers an alternative to staffed residential or institutional programs for these children.

- **Other Placement Options** – Not all children in the care of the Ministry can be cared for by foster parents or extended family caregivers. Some children require more structured living arrangements provided through a residential placement. The Ministry supports several assessment and stabilization centres in the province to provide a short-term response for children or youth unable to remain at home or in a placement due to difficult behaviours. Adolescent group homes provide care for youth requiring a supportive group-living environment with their peers. Group homes are operated by both community organizations and by the Ministry. These homes provide 24-hour individualized care, safety and supervision for youth typically 12 years of age and older.

- **Family Violence and Sexual Assault Services** – The Ministry funds 10 women's shelters in Saskatchewan that provide emergency accommodation and support for women and their children who are leaving abusive and violent circumstances. Sexual assault services provide crisis intervention, support and counseling to victims of sexual assault. These services are delivered by community-based organizations in North Battleford, Lloydminster, Prince Albert, Regina, Yorkton and Saskatoon.

- **Adoption** – The Ministry facilitates domestic, assisted, and inter-country adoptions. Domestic adoption refers to the adoption of a child in the permanent care of the Minister of Social Services prior to adoption. The Assisted Adoption Program provides financial assistance to families interested in parenting a child with special needs who is in the Minister's care. The Inter-country Adoption Program helps Saskatchewan residents who wish to adopt a child from another country.

- **Post-Adoption Services** – The Saskatchewan Post-Adoption Registry processes requests for information or contact from those involved in the adoption process. Services provided free-of-charge through the Registry include provision of non-identifying information, search and contact services, passive registration and special search services.

Community Inclusion

The Community Living Division (CLD) leads the Ministry's programming for people with intellectual disabilities, delivering programs and services across the province primarily through an extensive system of community-based organizations (CBOs). CLD funds approximately 85 CBOs that provide services to the public in the following areas: residential services, including group homes and supported independent living programs; day programs, including vocational and activity programs; family supports, including the family respite program; and specialized programs, including crisis and behavioural supports. The focus of program delivery is supporting the community inclusion of individuals with intellectual disabilities through building and enhancing a comprehensive community-based service continuum. In addition, the Division works with approximately 250 Approved Private Service Homes that offer a typical family home environment for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

- **Valley View Centre** – located near Moose Jaw, provides 24-hour, seven-days-a-week residential services for about 240 people with intellectual disabilities who have lived at the Centre for many years. No new admissions have been accepted since October 2002.
- **North View Home** – located in Prince Albert, provides 24-hour residential care for five people with intellectual disabilities. The program also provides residential and outreach crisis supports for people in the community who have intellectual disabilities and complex needs.
- **South View Home** – located near Moose Jaw, provides a home for up to three people with intellectual disabilities and complex needs. One of the spaces is reserved for individuals in crisis or in need of respite.

Office of Disability Issues

The Office of Disability Issues (ODI) works closely with the Ministry in its responsibility for government-wide disability policy co-ordination. ODI's goal is to increase the responsiveness of the mainstream service system to the needs of people with disabilities and their families, while developing or maintaining specialized services as needed. ODI does this by working with government ministries and the disability community to identify and resolve issues of concern such as education and training, employment, income support, health and wellness, and inclusion and full citizenship for people with disabilities.

Housing

The Housing Division has the lead responsibility for policy, programs and services that support housing self-reliance among low- and moderate-income households. The Division supplies the staff resources for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), which manages housing resources of approximately $2.35 billion in public housing assets. The Division, through SHC, has agreements with approximately 450 organizations, including housing authorities, housing co-operatives and non-profit agencies. More than 1,500 volunteers support the effort of housing authorities in Saskatchewan. SHC provides funding for ongoing and new housing programs and services for low-to-moderate-income households with an identified need. Assistance may be in the form of subsidized rents, forgivable or repayable loans, or a grant. Programs include social and affordable rental housing, home renovations, repairs and energy retrofit programs, home adaptation programs, supports to independent living for seniors, and homeownership options.

- SHC's Rental Development Program, Homeownership, and Secondary Suites programs are designed to increase the supply of affordable housing in the province. The Rental Development Program provides one-time capital funding to assist non-profit corporations, co-operatives, municipalities and the private sector to develop affordable rental units for low-to-moderate-income households. The Homeownership Program provides forgivable equity loans and low-interest second mortgages to eligible families to help them buy a home. The Secondary Suite Program provides forgivable loans to individuals, non-profit and Aboriginal organizations and the private sector to develop affordable rental suites in existing and new housing.
- Social and affordable rental programs provide low-cost rental housing for eligible individuals and families. The Social Housing Rental Program provides quality, suitable, affordable rental housing for low-income seniors, families and people with disabilities. Rent is based on income, with priority given to families in crisis and those with health and/or social needs.

The Affordable Housing Rental Program enables eligible moderate-income families and individuals to access suitable subsidized rental accommodations. The program's objectives are to alleviate the shortage of rental accommodation for moderate-income families and individuals in larger-market communities and create a supply of affordable rental housing in communities where there is limited private-market rental accommodation.

- Repair, renovation and adaptation programs offer forgivable loans to low-income homeowners and to rental property owners with low-income tenants to upgrade their properties to minimum health and safety standards. Home adaptation programs offer financial assistance to low-income homeowners and tenants to make homes accessible for seniors or people with disabilities to help them live independently.

- Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program (SHEIP) provides financial assistance to low-to-moderate income homeowners and rental property owners with low-income tenants to make energy efficiency retrofits that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and make housing more affordable. The program is a "top up" to the federal ecoENERGY Retrofit Program and SaskEnergy's EnerGuide for Houses Program.

- Saskatchewan Assisted Living Services (SALS) provides tenants living in senior social housing with access to community-based support services that help maintain their independence and quality of life.

Progress in 2008-09

Significant Achievements

Significant achievements by the Ministry in 2008-09 include:

- Beginning in May 2008, benefits provided to working families with children under the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement were increased by $30 to $54 per month, depending upon the size of the family. This is the largest increase in the program's 10 year history. At the same time, income eligibility thresholds were increased by between $450 and $570 per month, depending upon family size. These increases help ensure that families are supported in their decisions to work.

- Indexation adjustments to the SAP/TEA shelter allowances and to the SRHS were made in August 2008 and February 2009, based on CMHC's semi-annual rental market survey *(Government news release, January 20, 2009).*

- Increased benefits under the Seniors Income Plan (SIP) – formerly known as the Saskatchewan Income Plan *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

- SIP rate increases took effect January 1, 2009, more than doubling the benefit—from $90 to $190 per month for single seniors, and from $72.50 to $155 each per month for couples *(commitment from the 2008 Throne Speech).*

- In October 2008, the province announced the largest-ever investment in programming for people with intellectual disabilities. Over the next four years, $76.9 million will be phased in to address the wait-list of 440 individuals with intellectual disabilities who require specialized, residential and day programs to meet their assessed needs. This initiative includes investments to redesign the funding model for day programs, increase services for individuals with complex needs, and support enhancements in the Approved Private Service Home program. In addition, nearly $28 million is provided for capital projects.

- $3.3 million for enhancements to the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS).

- Enhancements to the SRHS took effect in August 2008, with payments made to 3,975 households with children or a disabled family member. By March 31, 2009, the number of households receiving the supplement had risen to 5,170 *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

- $5.5 million for 82 additional out-of-home spaces for at-risk children, including alternate care, foster care, stabilization centres, therapeutic foster care, adolescent group homes, and treatment group homes for children in care of the Ministry *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

- $5 million for 30 additional child protection caseworkers and 30 permanency placement planners to handle the 22 per cent increase in the caseload of children in care of the Ministry since 2004 *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

- $1.1 million funding increase for transition houses and sexual assault centres to strengthen services to women who are sexually assaulted and/or are the victims of domestic violence *(commitment from Minister mandate letter).*

- Funding was provided to 29 services in 14 communities for women who are sexually assaulted and/or are the victims of domestic violence. Services are delivered by community-based organizations and include transition houses, sexual assault services and family violence outreach *(commitment from Minister mandate letter).*

- $2.4 million to support a growing caseload of people with intellectual disabilities and help them to access residential and day programs.

  Twenty new initiatives have been approved and started. These projects will increase the capacity of existing homes and spaces, including:

  - 26 new residential spaces (including 14 spaces for individuals with complex needs);
  - 16 new day-program spaces (including eight spaces for individuals with complex needs); and
  - 40 hours per week of additional supported-living capacity.

  (Commitment from 2008-09 Budget.)

- The Rental Development Program provides funding for either new construction or acquisition and renovation of affordable rental housing. As of March 31, 2009, a total of 349 units have been completed with 1,164 currently under construction. A further 696 units have had funding committed and are in a tender, design or land search phase of construction.

Progress by Program Area

This section provides more detailed results of the Ministry's achievements during the April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009 fiscal year. Results are provided for each of the major program areas for which the Ministry is responsible.

Income Assistance Division

Income Assistance Division provides financial assistance and a range of programs focused on increasing opportunities for self-sufficiency and employability for individuals and families with an identified need.

Results

- **$1.1 million increase for child-care parent subsidies.**

  On May 29, 2008, Education Minister Ken Krawetz announced 500 new licensed child-care spaces in 17 Saskatchewan communities. To date, the child-care subsidy caseload has remained stable, with little evidence of volume increases due to space expansion. In March 2009, 3,343 families received child-care subsidies *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget)*.

- **Promote job readiness and reduce welfare by providing more opportunities to access employment and skills programs.**

  The Ministry collaborated with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour (AEEL) to connect the most job-ready social assistance applicants and recipients with employment services to accelerate employment outcomes. AEEL delivers the services exclusively to referrals from Social Services. From June 2008 to March 2009, 4,289 single persons were referred to JobsFirst services in the six largest cities. One thousand, one hundred thirty-two of those participants subsequently reported employment. From November 2008 to March 2009, 1,078 single and two parent families were referred to Parent Supports services in the three largest cities. One hundred sixty-two of those participants reported employment. While employment outcomes are difficult to track and confirm, exits from social assistance are not. Preliminary analyses comparing JobsFirst participants to a matched comparison group from an earlier period indicates that JobsFirst contributes to accelerated exits from social assistance. The two ministries are currently collaborating to design more intensive job linkage and support services for individuals who are not successful after initially participating in the JobsFirst and Parent Support services *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget)*.

- **Simplify benefit structures, reduce administrative requirements, and invest in necessary technological upgrades.**

  Funding was allocated to proceed with selection of a commercial off-the-shelf software system to replace all major current income assistance service delivery support systems, as well as detailed implementation planning. Following a formal request for proposals, evaluation of commercial off-the-shelf software systems began, in conjunction with the Ministry's Child and Family Services and Community Living divisions *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget)*. If income assistance implementation plans are approved, development work will continue.

- **Provide equitable and separate income support for people with disabilities.**

  Terms of reference for a joint community-government task team were introduced at a meeting of community stakeholders in December 2008. A 16-member task team, with equal representation from the disability advocacy community and government, was formed to recommend design options for a new disability income support program. During March 2009, consultations were conducted with community stakeholders and Ministry staff. The task team will present the feedback from these consultations, along with its recommendations, to the Minister *(commitment from 2008 Throne Speech)*.

Measurement Results

The number of families receiving the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement (SES).

Introduced in 1998, SES helps low-income parents with the child-related costs of working. The performance measure may be influenced by several factors, including the health of the labour market at the lower end of the income scale. The measure is based on the monthly average number of families receiving SES payments during the fiscal year.

Year	Average number of families receiving SES per month
2004-05	7,710
2005-06	7,679
2006-07	6,852
2007-08	6,043
2008-09	5,874

Source: SS Report MRPW01

Measurement Results

The number of households and beneficiaries receiving Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) benefits or the Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA).

SAP and TEA are last resort income supports for people who have no other alternatives. A reduction in the number of households and persons depending on these programs for assistance indicate better outcomes for low-income people in Saskatchewan. The measure is calculated as a monthly average over a 12-month period. Over the past year, both the number of households and the number of beneficiaries have declined.

Year	Average number of households on SAP/TEA per month	Average number of beneficiaries on SAP/TEA per month
2006-07	27,079	46,346
2007-08	25,963	43,759
2008-09	24,412	40,713

Source: SS Income Assistance Report ER02

Measurement Results

Social assistance beneficiaries as a percentage of the provincial population.

Social assistance is affected by many external trends, such as the unemployment rate, economy and population growth. Declining reliance on social assistance suggests increased employment among social assistance households. This measure is the social assistance dependency rate — calculated as the monthly average number of social assistance beneficiaries as a percentage of the total living off-reserve provincial population aged zero to 64 years. Over the past year, the percentage of the population under 65 and in receipt of social assistance has declined.

Year	Population aged 0-64	Social Assistance beneficiaries as % of provincial population aged 0-64
2006-07	811,514	5.7%
2007-08	822,731	5.3%
2008-09	841,326	4.8%

Sources: SS Income Assistance Reports ER02 and Saskatchewan Health covered population by residence type, sex, and age group

Measurement Results

The proportion of new households who leave the program (SAP or TEA) in six months or less.

Income assistance is most often a bridge for people between employment. The rate at which people are able to exit welfare is a measure of how well they are able to find and take up opportunities for employment. This measure is a function of both the services provided by the Ministry and the job opportunities available to people. Ministry staff play an important role by connecting individuals with support programs and community services. The rate of exit is affected by the strength of the labour market and the demand for workers. The measure is based on the proportion of households who enrolled in SAP or TEA and were not receiving assistance six months later.

Year	Percentage of new SAP/TEA households leaving in six months or less
2006-07	53% (entrants from April 1/06 to March 31/07)
2007-08	54% (entrants from April 1/07 to March 31/08)
2008-09	53% (entrants from April 1/08 to March 31/09)

Source: SS SWIN payment data

Measurement Results

The number of families receiving the child care subsidy.

Child care is a necessary expense for working families with young children. The child-care subsidy covers a portion of the parents' costs. The subsidy is scaled to income so that lower-income families have a higher proportion of their child-care costs covered. This measure is based on the average number of subsidies provided each month.

Year	Average number of child care subsidies per month
2006-07	3,362
2007-08	3,412
2008-09	3,278

Source: SS Report BR65

Measurement Results

The number of families or individuals receiving the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS).

For low-income families, housing costs often consume a high percentage of family income. The SRHS was designed to ameliorate the effect of rental costs for families whose costs are high relative to their income. The supplement has two components: a Family Housing Supplement for low-income families with children, and a Disability Housing Supplement for individuals or families where at least one person in the household has a disability that affects their housing requirements. The measure reports on the average monthly number of households that receive either of the two rental housing supplements.

Year	Average number of households receiving the SRHS per month
2006-07	3,682
2007-08	3,777
2008-09	4,220

Source: SRHS monthly reports (data from SRHS extracts)

Measurement Results

The percentage of homes that upgraded to health and safety standards after initially failing the housing inspection for the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement (SRHS).

Some low-income families are unable to initially benefit from the SRHS, if the condition of their residence does not meet a health and safety test. The Ministry provides financial assistance to rental property owners for minor repairs that will bring their properties to a standard that would enable the tenants to qualify for assistance through the SRHS. These repairs are intended to address immediate health and safety issues. The Ministry has partnered with the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, and with a local contractor in Prince Albert, to complete health and safety inspections for the SRHS. About 200 cases are randomly selected each month.

The measure tracks the number of homes that are safer and more affordable for low-income tenants as a result of qualifying for the SRHS. This measure is based on the sample of homes inspected. The measure is the percentage of homes that upgraded to safety standards after initially failing the SRHS housing inspection.

Year end	Initial Inspection Results		Percentage of homes that upgraded to health and safety standards
	Passed Inspection	Failed/Declined Inspection	
March 31, 2006	67%	33%	40%
March 31, 2007	60%	40%	83%
March 31, 2008	60%	40%	85%
March 31, 2009	64%	36%	85%

Source: SS SWIN payment data

2006 figures using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Saskatchewan. The MBM varies by location and family size. In this performance measure, different family types are used to compare their benefits relative to the cost of goods and services in the Regina census metropolitan area.

Measurement Results

The percentage of Market Basket Measure (MBM) that is met by federal and provincial income support programs.

When living costs rise without an adjustment to financial assistance benefits, individuals and families become relatively worse off. Their decreased purchasing power puts them at a further disadvantage, hindering prospects for greater independence and well-being. This performance measure, calculated by Statistics Canada, compares the financial assistance available to different groups of low-income households to a standardized measure of low income. The MBM establishes the cost of a basket of goods and services that includes a nutritious diet, clothing and footwear, shelter, transportation, personal care items, household supplies and other necessary goods and services. The MBM is the preferred indicator of low income because it reflects actual costs and geographic variations. It attempts to measure a standard of living above subsistence and approaching social inclusion. This performance measure shows the extent to which government benefits change with respect to established social minimums utilizing the MBM.

Social assistance benefits are calculated based on available income from SAP/TEA, using shelter maximums, plus all federal and provincial transfers (i.e., child benefits, estimated GST and PST rebates), and income available through the SRHS. The calculation does not include special needs, earnings exemptions or the additional resources available through the SES. Utility costs for SAP and TEA are based on average actual payments. TEA rates are used here for both singles and single parents, while SAP rates are used for singles with disabilities. Benefits from other programs, such as supplementary health benefits, are omitted from the calculation.

The measure shows that increases to federal and provincial transfer payments are helping low-income individuals and families to reduce the low-income gap.

Percentage of MBM met by provincial and federal transfers for different household types

Year	Single, fully employable (TEA)	Single with disability (SAP)	Single parent with two children (TEA)
2006-07	57%	85%	95%
2007-08	66%	90%	112%
2008-09	66%	107%	112%

Source: Estimated federal and provincial transfers compared to the 2006 MBM for the Regina census metropolitan area, indexed to 2007 and 2008 using the all-items CPI. Previous annual reports calculated this measure using 2002 MBM thresholds indexed by applicable CPI. Accordingly, numbers shown in previous reports may vary slightly from those above. The 2006 MBM provides a more current basis for the estimates.

MBM data was last published in 2008 for the years 2002-2006. For this measure, the MBM has been estimated for subsequent years by adjusting the

Child and Family Services

Child and Family Services develops policy and provides services and funding to protect children from abuse and neglect, support families and communities in caring for children, assist at-risk youth and people facing family violence, and facilitate adoption.

Results

- **Provide annual funding to support the creation and operation of a provincial umbrella association for sexual assault services.**

  $70,000 was provided to the Saskatchewan Association of Sexual Assault Services (SASS) and $30,000 to the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan (PATHS) *(commitment from Minister's Mandate letter).*

- **$700,000 increase to support the Cognitive Disabilities Strategy, including $500,000 in enhanced funding to address the growing demand for the program.**

  The additional investment of $700,000 for the flexible fund allowed for continued support to existing clients and made it possible to support new applications for the benefit. The total annualized budget for 2008-09 for the direct services component of the Cognitive Disability Strategy was $2.76 million *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

  Rates to foster parents and extended family caregivers were increased by 15 per cent in 2007/08 and by 2.3 per cent on April 1, 2008 *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget).*

- **Develop a project plan for an electronic case management system for Child and Family Services.**

  A formal request for proposals for the system was issued in January 2009 and closed in March 2009. The project team and a number of regional staff are evaluating the submitted proposals. Short-listed vendors will be invited to demonstrate their products in April and May 2009.

- **Develop and implement a community-based organization (CBO) operational review framework of residential children's facilities to monitor and improve service delivery, operations and financial management.**

  One permanent and one term employee have been hired to work with two contract employees. The Ministry is focusing on reviewing First Nations on-reserve group homes and will then focus on off-reserve facilities.

- **In February 2009, the Children's Advocate issued a report on the investigation into overcrowding of foster children in Saskatoon.**

  A comprehensive response was provided to the public in February 2009, which focussed on building capacity, leadership and accountability. Details of the actions to be taken are in the Ministry's 2009-10 Plan. *(http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2009-10/SSPlan0910.pdf)*

Measurement Results

The number of child protection families served by the Ministry.

When a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, the Ministry is required to conduct an investigation into the circumstances and conditions surrounding the child and his or her family. Depending on the circumstances, Ministry staff may seek to help the parents safely care for their children by referring parents or children to appropriate agencies, or by supporting the family through in-home parent aide services. Measuring the number of child protection families informs the Ministry of supports that are required to protect and support the growth and development of children, youth and families. The table shows both the number of families being served at a point in time (year end), as well as the total number of families receiving services during the year.

Year End	Number of child protection families served by the Ministry at year end	Number of child protection families served by the Ministry during the year
March 31, 2004	1,860	5,193
March 31, 2005	1,951	4,865
March 31, 2006	2,172	5,169
March 31, 2007	1,935	5,379
March 31, 2008	1,954	5,163
March 31, 2009	2,300	5,554

Source: Automated Client Index: month-end caseload reports and five-year extract

Measurement Results

The percentage of out-of-home placements that are extended family placements.

This measure indicates the Ministry's success at extended family placements that maintain a closer link between child and family. This measure is calculated as the number of extended family placements over the total number of out-of-home placements (e.g., group homes, private treatment homes, foster homes) for children at March 31 of each fiscal year.

Year end	Percentage of out-of-home placements with extended family
March 31, 2005	20.1%
March 31, 2006	22.5%
March 31, 2007	24.4%
March 31, 2008	24.8%
March 31, 2009	26.5%

Source: Automated Client Index: month-end caseload reports

Measurement Results

The number of children in care of the Minister.

Children may be placed in care of the Minister on a temporary or permanent basis if their parents are unable to care for them safely. Children who grow up in care of the Minister frequently experience poorer life outcomes than children raised by their own families. Some of these children are served by Ministry staff and resources, others by staff from the First Nations Child and Family Service agencies. The rate of children in care is the number per thousand of children and youth (zero to 19 years) in the province. Saskatchewan Health covered population data was used to estimate the number of children and youth in the province. The number of children in care is affected by external demographic factors, as well as by social conditions and the incidence of problems such as addictions and mental health within families.

Year end	Number of children off-reserve in care	Number of children in care with First Nations agencies	Rate of children in care (per 1000)*
March 31, 2003	2,947	1,082	13.7
March 31, 2004	2,798	1,133	14.2
March 31, 2005	2,907	1,099	14.0
March 31, 2006	3,053	1,123	14.4
March 31, 2007	3,243	1,159	15.5
March 31, 2008	3,336	1,166	16.3
March 31, 2009	3,593	1.206	16.5

Source: Automated Client Index: month-end caseload and INAC reports
** Includes all children and youth in care in the Province.*

Community Living Division

The Community Living Division provides and facilitates community-based supports that assist people with intellectual disabilities to live as independently as possible within their communities.

Results

- **Develop plans to address the Community Living Division's wait-list and ensure people with disabilities receive the support they need.**

  Plans are underway for 106 of the 440 people on the wait-list, as follows: new services have been developed for 42 people; services have been approved and implementation is pending for 36 people; and 28 people originally on the wait-list have either been served within existing resources or no longer require services, freeing up resources to meet the need of others beyond the 440 individuals on the wait-list *(commitment from 2008-09 Budget)*.

Measurement Results

The number of admissions to Valley View Centre.

A decision in October 2002 to end admissions to Valley View reflects the Ministry's vision of community inclusion for people with intellectual disabilities. At that time, the Centre's population was 365 people. During the last four fiscal years, no one has been admitted to Valley View, and the population has declined from 296 in 2005-06, to 242 at March 31, 2009.

Measurement Results

The number of people with intellectual disabilities moving from Valley View to community residential alternatives.

Movement of people living at Valley View to the community is one measure of the effectiveness of efforts to develop family and community supports that encourage community inclusion. Many people with similar needs to those currently living at Valley View, in addition to people who have relocated from the Centre, are well-supported by community-based options. Some people (or family members, on their behalf) have indicated a preference to continue living at Valley View.

Year end	Number of people moving from Valley View into the community
March 31, 2006	6
March 31, 2007	7
March 31, 2008	10
March 31, 2009	1

Source: Community Living Division reports

Measurement Results

The number of people with intellectual disabilities living in their own residences with minimal life skills support through Ministry-funded supportive living programs.

Independence and choice are important aspects of quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities. This measure indicates success at developing supports that provide people with intellectual disabilities with opportunities to live independently in their communities. Though the number of people living independently has remained relatively steady, the hours of service required to support them has increased. Participation in the supportive living program is expected to increase as the Ministry is able to increase program availability through the increase in funding. This measure is the year-end total number of people living in their own residences and supported through the Ministry's supportive living programs.

Year end	Number of people with intellectual disabilities living in their own residences through Ministry-funded supportive living programs
March 31, 2006	450
March 31, 2007	446
March 31, 2008	447
March 31, 2009	445

Source: Community Living Division reports

Measurement Results

The number of children with disabilities for whom families receive a respite benefit.

Respite permits families who have children with intellectual disabilities to obtain temporary assistance in caring for their child. The program enables the parent to spend additional time with other family members, and to engage in other family and household activities that are normally not possible due to the intensive care required by the child with the disability. Respite provides the extra support that allows children to remain at home and be cared for by family members. Since the inception of the respite initiative, the Ministry has seen a steady increase in participation of families in the program.

Year end	Number of children with disabilities for whom families receive a respite benefit
March 31, 2007	429
March 31, 2008	598
March 31, 2009	620

Source: Community Living Division reports

Housing

While recognizing that the marketplace is the primary vehicle for the provision of housing, the Ministry's Housing Division, through Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), promotes independence and self-sufficiency by providing housing and housing services to households that could not otherwise afford adequate, safe, and secure shelter. SHC provides a continuum of housing programs and services, including social and affordable rental portfolios, home renovation, repair and energy retrofit programs, home adaptation programs, supports to independent living for seniors, and homeownership options.

Results

- **Legislation to create a new, modern, more responsive board for SHC.**

  The Bill to amend the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act 1995 received second reading on March 16, 2009.

Measurement Results

The number of affordable housing units developed through housing programs.

SHC has responded to the current housing demand through new construction or acquisition and renovation of affordable rental housing units. We have committed funding to enable low-to-moderate income families to achieve homeownership. The units vacated by these households benefit others in search of affordable rental housing. Consideration

is being given to other options that will enable SHC to develop additional affordable housing promptly and effectively.

- The Rental Development Program provides one-time capital funding of up to 70 per cent of total capital costs for either new construction or acquisition and renovation of affordable rental housing projects.
- SHC has targeted rental development to address the needs of singles with multiple needs, youth in transition, vulnerable families with children, seniors, persons with disabilities, and First Nations and Métis people.
- The Secondary Suite Program aims to increase the supply of affordable rental housing for low-to-moderate income households by providing financial assistance to property owners.
- SHC helps to address the availability of affordable housing by requiring rental property owners who have forgivable loans from SHC programs to keep rents affordable for a specified period of time.
- The Homeownership Program improves access to homeownership for low-to-moderate income households with dependents. Under the program, households are eligible to receive a forgivable loan up to $20,000 and a repayable low interest mortgage up to $30,000.
- The Remote Housing Program provides grants to assist low-to-moderate income families in the north to build their own homes. Forgiveable loans based on a percentage of basic unit construction costs to a specified maximum are available to approved families.

The number of affordable homeownership housing units developed through housing programs.

Year ending	Housing Units	
	Conditional Approvals	Homes Purchased
March 31, 2008	196	48
March 31, 2009	170	297

The Homeownership Program commenced Jan. 1, 2008
Source: Saskatchewan Housing Corporation

Year ending	Housing Units			
	In Planning	Committed Pre-Construction	Starts	Completed
March 31, 2008	2183*	161	603	278
March 31, 2009	341	696	1,164	287

Source: Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Base: January 1, 2008

Measurement Results

The number of households assisted through repair, renovation and adaptation programs.

SHC is committed to improving the quality of affordable housing to ensure that households have the stability they need to pursue opportunities in Saskatchewan's economy. We continue to help rental property owners and homeowners respond to housing needs through repair, adaptation, and energy retrofit programs.

- Repair and renovation programs provide financial assistance to low-income homeowners and rental property owners to upgrade properties to minimum health and safety standards or to make homes more accessible for persons with disabilities.
- SHC spent over $40 million on modernization and improvement efforts to maintain the portfolio of government assisted housing in good condition.

- Saskatchewan Home Energy Improvement Program (SHEIP) provides funding to undertake energy retrofits that will improve the quality of homes, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce heating costs. SHEIP is linked to the federal ecoENERGY Retrofit Program and SaskEnergy's Saskatchewan EnerGuide for Homes Grant Program. SHEIP is expect to assist 8,000 households by 2011.

- Funding was provided through the Federal Aboriginal and Affordable Housing Trusts for major capital improvements to non-profit rental housing stock managed by non-profit and co-operative groups. As of December 31, 2008, a total of $3.9 million, including administration costs, has been allocated, of which $3.6 million occurred during 2008.

	Households Assisted	
Year ending	Health, Safety and Accessibility Renovations	Energy Efficiency Retrofits
March 31, 2009	638	1,011

Source: Saskatchewan Housing Corporation
Base: January 1, 2008

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

Results

- **Hold a summit of community-based organizations within the first six months of our government to develop a new social policy direction for Saskatchewan.**

  Five CBO summits were held in locations across the province, with more than 800 people participating. The summits were conversation-based in order to gather information from a large group of people. Verbatim "what we heard" documents from each summit are available on the Ministry website (http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/cbosummit).

  Themes arising from the meetings include:

  - The need for long-term funding arrangements for CBOs;
  - The creation of a central database for CBO services; and
  - Strategies to recognize and share best practices among CBOs *(Minister's mandate letter).*

- **Move toward long-term, stable and predictable funding for CBOs, while ensuring greater accountability for the dollars spent.**

  Work was done in 2008/09 towards offering multi-year contracts to CBOs. Starting in April 2009, selected agencies will be offered multi-year contracts. By the 2011-12 fiscal year, all CBOs will be offered a multi-year contract option *(Minister's mandate letter).*

- **$2.9 million was allocated in the 2008-09 Budget for approximately 300 CBOs. This includes a $1.6 million increase to support a network of 81 CBOs providing residential, day program, advocacy and family support services for people with intellectual disabilities.**

  A 2.3 per cent increase to salary and operating costs was provided to all Income Assistance Division, Child and Family Services and Community Living Division agencies. The incremental funding for this is $2.2 million, excluding private-service homes. Total incremental funding, including private-service homes, is $2.9 million. The 2.3 per cent increase was a corporate decision across all ministries by the provincial government *(commitment from 2008 Budget).*

- **Effective October 1, 2008, CBOs that received funding from the Ministry of Social Services were given a seven per cent lift to their core funding. The lift was intended to address the immediate concerns of CBOs with respect to recruitment and retention issues.**

2008-09 Financial Overview

Expenditures

The Ministry's actual expenditures for 2008-09 were $676.8 million. This is $41.3 million over the original appropriation of $635.5 million. The Ministry received supplementary estimates for the Seniors Income Plan ($4.6 million), rental housing supplements ($1.9 million), increases to funding for Community-Based Organizations ($6.0 million) and for housing ($29.3 million). The Ministry finished the year $520,000 under its revised appropriation of $677.3 million.

As part of the economic stimulus package, $29.3 million was provided to Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. Social Services continues to experience increases in child and family services programs due to cost per case in foster care and increases in child protection cases. The Minjstry also saw a caseload decrease in its Income Assistance Division, but experienced a leveling off at year end.

Revenues

The Ministry collects revenues related to fees for management and collection services, cost-sharing programs with the federal government, and repayments of public assistance. All revenue collected is deposited into the General Revenue Fund.

The Ministry's actual revenues for 2008-09 were $25 million — $1.7 million more than the budget of $23.3 million. The variance is primarily made up of payments from the federal government for fire evacuations and First Nations children in the care of the Minister.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Utilization

The Ministry's original FTE budget for 2008-09 was 1,973.1. The actual FTE utilization was 1,943.4. The under-utilization of FTEs is due to difficulties in recruiting, primarily in the Housing Division.

Other

The Ministry is responsible for the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), which is a Treasury Board Crown. Information on housing, including SHC's annual report for its fiscal year ending December 31, 2008, can be found at http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/housing.

A summary of the Ministry's 2008-09 budgeted revenue compared to actual revenue is presented below, with explanation of significant variances.

2008-2009 Revenues ($000s)

	2007-08 Actual	2008-09 Budget	2008-09 Actual	Variance Over/(Under)	
Sales, Services and Service Fees					
Management and Collection Services	6,624	8,378	7,959	(419)	
Miscellaneous Medical and Institutional Services	616	643	577	(66)	
Other Miscellaneous Services	7	8	3	(5)	
Miscellaneous Deductions from Staff Salaries	47	53	50	(3)	
Subtotal	**7,294**	**9,082**	**8,589**	**(493)**	
Transfers from the Federal Government					
Official Languages	-	-	-	-	
Young Offenders Agreement	1,178	1,178	1,178	-	
Special Allowance for Children in Care	7,971	7,800	8,499	699	
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	1,622	1,100	3,376	2,276	(1)
Subtotal	**10,771**	**10,078**	**13,053**	**2,975**	
Other Revenue					
Maintenance Order Revenues	545	625	592	(33)	
Casual Revenue	3	45	25	(20)	
Repayment - Public Assistance	1,484	3,000	2,251	(749)	(2)
Refunds of Previous Years' Expenditures	636	500	553	53	
Collection Agency Fees Withheld	(34)	-	(33)	(33)	
Subtotal	**2,634**	**4,170**	**3,388**	**(782)**	
Total Revenues	**20,699**	**23,330**	**25,030**	**1,700**	

Explanation of Significant Revenue Variances

1. An increase of $1.184 million is due to the transfer of 23 children from a closed First Nations agency (Nehiyaw Awasis Siceca Cistinna in Sturgeon Lake) to the Ministry and to the delay in setting up a new agency. In addition, an increase of $1.092 million is for fire evacuations.

2. In 2007-08, accounting treatment was changed for repayments for public assistance to credit some of the repayments against the receivable rather than record as revenue. This decision was made after the budget was decided for 2008-09.

The following table outlines actual and budgeted expenditures by subvote and subprogram, with explanation of significant variances.

2008-2009 Expenditures ($000s)

Subvote/ Allocation	2007-08 Actual	2008-09 Budget	2008-09 Actual	Variance Over/ Under	Notes
Central Management and Services (SS01)					
Minister's Salary		43	43	-	
Executive Management	1,520	1,467	1,677	210	
Central Services	15,148	14,593	14,398	(195)	
Accommodation Services	17,469	18,254	18,275	21	
Subvote Total	**34,137**	**34,357**	**34,393**	**36**	
Employment Support and Income Assistance (SS03)					
Saskatchewan Assistance Program	210,352	215,522	214,093	(1,429)	(1)
Transitional Employment Allowance	28,974	23,863	21,519	(2,344)	(2)
Saskatchewan Income Plan - Senior Citizens' Benefits	8,121	8,300	11,437	3,137	(3)
Shelter Supplements	5,605	7,100	10,662	3,562	
Saskatchewan Child Benefit	1,038	515	652	137	(4)
Saskatchewan Employment Supplement	17,416	18,500	20,263	1,763	
Income Security Administration	2,747	3,191	2,689	(502)	(5)
Client and Community Support	4,176	4,402	4,404	2	
Child Care Parent Subsidies	15,986	17,100	14,809	(2,291)	(6)
Subvote Total	**294,415**	**298,493**	**300,528**	**2,035**	
Child and Family Services (SS04)					
Child and Family Community Services	65,151	65,386	70,708	5,322	(7)
Child and Family Community-Based Organization Services	24,580	32,316	34,543	2,227	(8)
Child and Family Services Administration	4,053	8,037	5,538	(2,499)	(9)
Subvote Total	**93,784**	**105,739**	**110,789**	**5,050**	
Supporting Families and Building Economic Independence (SS05)					
Program Delivery	59,861	63,841	64,880	1,039	
Income Support - Call Centres	4,803	5,272	5,193	(79)	
Subvote Total	**64,664**	**69,113**	**70,073**	**960**	
Community Inclusion (SS06)					
Supports for Cognitive Disabilities	2,476	2,760	3,358	598	(10)
Program Delivery	26,389	27,684	27,380	(304)	
Payments and Grants	70,766	74,995	78,609	3,614	(8)
Subvote Total	**99,631**	**105,439**	**109,347**	**3,908**	
Office of Disability Issues (SS09)	**225**	**267**	**245**	**(22)**	
Housing (SS12)					
Housing Operations	10,187	11,755	10,448	(1,307)	(11)
Saskatchewan Housing Corporation	17,135	10,355	40,955	30,600	(12)
Subvote Total	**27,322**	**22,110**	**51,403**	**29,293**	
Total Expenditures	**614,178**	**635,518**	**676,778**	**41,260**	
Less Capital Asset Acquistions	**(766)**	**(5,033)**	**(1,107)**	**3,926**	
Add Change in Prepaids	**3**		**(11)**	**(11)**	
Add Amortization	**1617**	**961**	**944**	**(17)**	
Total Expenses	**615,032**	**631,446**	**676,604**	**45,158**	

(See following page for notes.)

Explanation of Significant Expenditure Variances

1. Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) caseloads declined in this fiscal year.
2. The Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) experienced caseload declines.
3. Enhancements to the Seniors Income Plan implemented in January 2009 increased both the caseload and cost per case. The Ministry was provided with $4.6 million in supplementary estimates to cover this initiative.
4. The rental housing supplement was increased in October 2008. Funding for this initiative included supplementary estimates of $1.9 million, with the balance absorbed by the decrease in the SAP/TEA caseload.
5. Income Assistance Division (IAD) budgeted for a number of contracts in their operating expenses for work on the IAD system replacement and other evaluation projects. These either did not go ahead or were paid for by the IAD system replacement program.
6. While the number of licensed child-care spaces is increasing, the take-up on the subsidy program has declined.
7. The number of children in care and the cost per case exceed the numbers used to calculate the Ministry's budget requirements for 2008-09.
8. Additional funding was provided to Community-Based Organizations in October 2008. The Ministry received $6.0 million in supplementary estimates to cover this initiative.
9. Actual costs incurred on the Case Management System for child welfare in 2008-09 were less than budgeted.
10. Applications for the Cognitive Disability Program continue to exceed the budget.
11. Both salary and operating expenses are under-expended in Housing Operations due to challenges recruiting employees.
12. This consists of a $29.3 million transfer provided through supplementary estimates for Saskatchewan Housing Corporation as part of the economic stimulus package, and an additional $1.3 million transfer for housing projects from the Ministry of Social Services.

Third-Party Funding

This year, Social Services expended $167.4 million in funding to third parties, the majority of which was provided to Community-Based Organizations.

For More Information

Saskatchewan Social Services Regional Services

Centre (Saskatoon Office)	306-933-6075
Kindersley Service Centre	306-463-5470
Rosetown Service Centre	306-882-5400
Northeast (Prince Albert)	1-800-487-8603
Creighton Service Centre	1-800-532-9580
La Ronge Service Centre	1-800-567-4066
Melfort Service Centre	1-800-487-8640
Nipawin Service Centre	1-800-487-8594
Northwest (North Battleford)	1-877-993-9911
Buffalo Narrows Service Centre	1-800-667-7685
La Loche Service Centre	1-877-371-1131
Lloydminster Service Centre	1-877-367-7707
Meadow Lake Service Centre	1-877-368-8898
Southeast (Yorkton)	1-877-786-3288
Estevan Service Centre	306-637-4550
Fort Qu'Appelle Service Centre	1-800-667-3260
Weyburn Service Centre	306-848-2404
Southwest (Regina)	306-787-3700
Moose Jaw Service Centre	306-694-3647
Swift Current Service Centre	306-778-8219

General Inquiries	306-787-3700
Communications and Public Education	306-787-3686
Website:	www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca
E-mail:	communications@cr.gov.sk.ca
Office of Disability Issues	306-787-7283*
	1-877-915-7468*
Contact Centre	306-798-0660
	1-866-701-4578
	306-787-1065*
	1-866-995-0099*

* Numbers are equipped for Hearing Impaired TTY calls.

Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC)

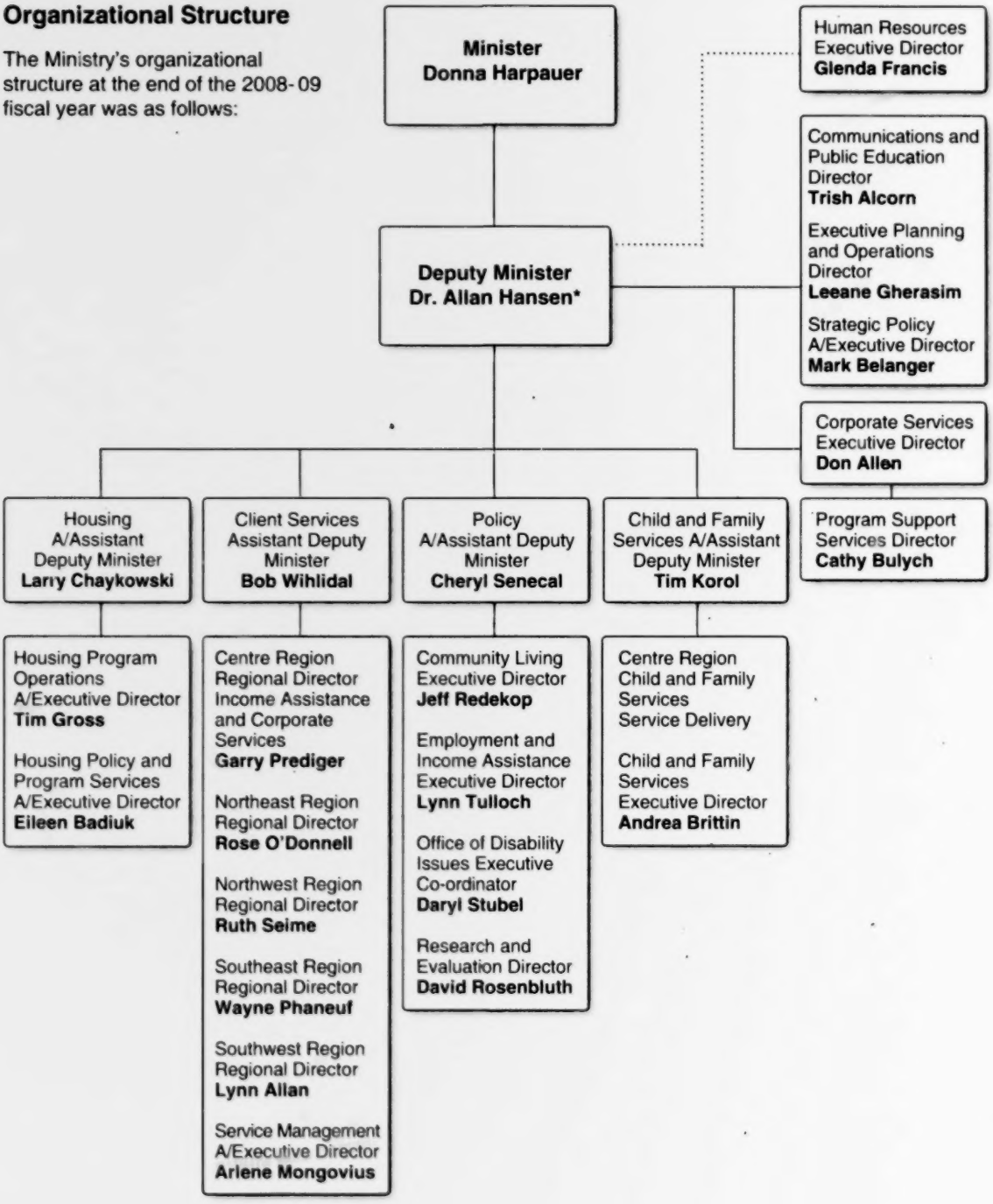
SHC Offices

Prince Albert	306-953-2540
Regina	306-787-4117
Saskatoon	306-933-6292

Appendix

Organizational Structure

The Ministry's organizational structure at the end of the 2008-09 fiscal year was as follows:



** Marian Zerr was appointed Deputy Minister effective June 17, 2009.*